





THE

NEGRO LABOR

QUESTION.

BY A NEW-YORK MERCHANT.

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## THE NEGRO LABOR QUESTION.

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THE question of the condition and capability of the African Negro is at length beginning to assume a very different practical shape from any that it has ever yet had in the eyes of the world—in the eyes, indeed, of the Christian Church also, since opportunities are likely to be opened for conveying to those benighted millions of our fellow-creatures the light of the Gospel of Truth, such as have never, at any former period, been within the power of Christendom. A necessity has arisen for the employment of negroes in various kinds of human labor for which they, above all others, are peculiarly adapted: nay, not only so, but, it would appear as the only people who are really fitted by nature—that is, by their constitution, their organization, and other natural circumstances of their condition—to carry on such labor healthfully and properly. Not on this continent only, but in the Western Indies, and even in some eastern portions of the other great continent,

there are productions of the earth, the cultivation of which can not be carried on—at least without a great waste, not only in economy but in human life—except by the African Negro; and these productions are not only staple articles of commerce among the civilized nations of the earth, but are actually becoming essential for the supply of man's necessities, and indeed for the furtherance of human progress and civilization.

Well, then, if we look to Africa, and to the Africans, we see a people who are not only adapted by nature, and to all appearance especially designed by Providence for such work, but who are also themselves, in their present condition, at once a disgrace and a curse to humanity, from their not being devoted or habituated to labor. We want the work carried on, and the very carrying of it on by these barbarous, degraded, and most miserable people, would not only conduce to the advancement of some of the most important of the material interests of civilized nations, but would have the immediate effect of raising them from their present wretched state of savage life, to a condition of respectability, comfort, and happiness. All labor is civilizing. There can be no civilization without creating necessities, and these ne-



cessities can only be supplied by labor. Thus labor acts and reacts to the advantage of those who are called upon to engage in it. Well has the poet said of it :

"'Tis the primal curse,  
But softened into mercy ; made the pledge  
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan."

It is because the Negroes of Africa, known, we believe, at present to number at least fifty millions—it is because these hordes of our fellow-beings have not labor, have not that "primal curse softened into mercy," that we find them in so dreadfully debased a condition of humanity.

The labor of these people, then, even in mercy to themselves, must be procured. The necessities of civilized life, the means of human progress, nay, the spread of the Gospel of Christ, all combine to demand it. How, then, is it to be obtained ?

No one who knows any thing of the nature of the Negro race can fail to acknowledge, that they must be treated very much as children would have to be treated, whom we wished to train up in the ways of civilized life. They must be subjected to control ; and, if it be necessary, to coercion. There must, at any rate, in such a case, be servitude ; we can not pos-

sibly secure the labor of such a people without it—we can not make the slightest advance towards obtaining it, except on a principle of servitude. It is the remark of no less an eminent Christian authority than that of Dr. Paley, in his Moral Philosophy, that “servitude differs from slavery in this: that the servant contracts to work for his master, while the slave is, without such contract, compelled to labor; but in both there is the same obligation on the part of the master not to diminish, beyond absolute necessity, the sum of human happiness.” Now, however startling it may at first sight appear, a certain kind of *slavery* is essentially necessary with the negroes, under these very circumstances, to secure their *servitude*. For, in fact, in the very outset of such a consideration as this, the negroes, as an uncivilized, as a barbarous people, are not in a position to enter into any contract of labor, of themselves; neither, if they were, would there be any guarantee for their fulfilling it. In civilized life, when men who want such labor have to do with civilized men, when they are living altogether, under institutions which secure the fulfillment of contracts for labor, as of all other contracts, then voluntary servitude is not only a tenable thing, but a right one—nay, we should say the only right one, ac-

according to the principles of that even-handed justice which must prevail in the world, if human progress is to be carried on to any creditable and profitable end; and, above all, where the influences of Christianity are to be fostered and maintained. Dr. Paley, therefore, is quite right in drawing such a distinction as he does between servitude and slavery, under such a state of things; and especially in connection with the assertion of so great an interest as that which is comprehended in his expression, "The sum of human happiness." But then, as respects the negroes, the case is totally altered. In them we have a people who are really disqualified, naturally and conditionally disqualified, for servitude, as thus contra-distinguished from slavery. Most true it is, as this great Christian divine declares, that "the slave is without such contract compelled to labor." You can not, indeed, have his labor at all without a certain compulsion. But it is not necessary that such compulsion should be a cruel one. And it must not be so, under any circumstances, else we disgrace our character as a Christian people. To increase "the sum of human happiness," even among those we compel to labor, must ever be the first great end in view. This is the great and solemn obligation which lies upon us, under our present advan-

tages over the negro people. As we have already observed, there are millions of these our fellow-creatures in a state of darkness, and wretchedness, and degradation, the continuance of which, without any earnest and sufficient effort on our part to ameliorate or to remove it, is in every point of view most discreditable to Christendom. Well is it argued, by a writer on the negro race, that they have "vices natural to them"—natural, that is, not merely because they are a fearful instance of poor human nature left to itself, to go on in a course of unmitigated degradation; but natural also, on account of those very evils which labor itself would be the most effectual to remedy. The very stupidity of these people, which is the direct consequence of a want of occupation, forces them continually into vices of the most depraved and brutal character: more so, indeed, with the Africans than in the case of any other people on the face of the globe; and which is to be accounted for, no doubt, by those peculiarities of their physical condition which have become a second nature to them under the influences of a torrid clime, and all those debasing habits and associations under which they are found to live. They are represented to us as being "atrocious, cruel, revengeful, and intemperate, *by a necessity of*

*nature.*" And the same writer, in connection with this remark, draws a very remarkable distinction, and one which goes farther in support of our view than may at first sight appear, when he says: "For though all these vices abound in Europe, it is evident that they proceed not from nature, but from wrong education, which gives to the youthful mind such deep impressions as no future exertions can completely eradicate."

Besides, when we come to talk of slavery, we must not forget that in every part of Africa itself, with which the nations of Europe have had any intercourse, slavery of the very worst kind prevails to an enormous extent. This is a fact which has long been patent to the world, or at any rate, to that portion of the world which would give itself the trouble to look at this question, in any degree, below its surface. And we have an attestation of it in one of the most recent, as it is one of the most important of the works on Africa, which have for many years appeared in our language—we allude to Dr. Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South-Africa*, which is at this moment exciting an interest throughout the civilized world, that probably no work on Africa has ever done before. Throughout the pages of this eminent publication, then, we find evidences of the

existence of slavery among the African negroes in all directions. For instance, we open the book at random, and find such a statement as this: "They had a gang of young female slaves in a chain, hoeing the ground in front of their encampment, to clear it of weeds and grass; these were purchased recently in Lobale, whence the traders had now come. There were many Mambari with them, and the establishment was conducted with that military order which pervades all the arrangements of the Portuguese colonists." Again, the Mambari alluded to in the foregoing extract, are themselves stealers of their own species, for the purpose of the slave-trade. "The Mambari," says Dr. Livingstone, "erect large huts, of a square shape, to stow these stolen ones in; they are well fed, but aired by night only. The frequent kidnapping from outlying hamlets explains the stockades we saw around them. The parents have no redress; for even Shinte (the chief) himself seems fond of working in the dark." Again, when on the banks of the Quilo, in another part of the country, Dr. Livingstone relates: "As we were now in the slave market, it struck me that the sense of insecurity felt by the natives might account for the circumstance that those who have been sold as slaves, and freed again, when

questioned, profess to like the new state better than their primitive one." And the reason of this is self-evident. Their primitive one, though one of freedom, in a certain sense, though a very degraded one, was really irksome, by reason of its degradation; whereas, by being placed under control, though that control were not such, by any means, as it ought to be, they were yet accustomed to habits of life which doubtless had a great effect in relieving them of the intolerable monotony, to say nothing more, of their former existence. Here, however, in the very paragraph from which we are quoting, there is given, in connection with their former condition, an instance of the necessity that prevails for these people being rescued altogether from their present circumstances, and placed in a position where constant, active labor would become a daily necessity. "To one who has observed," Dr. Livingstone goes on to remark, "the hard toil of the poor, in old civilized countries, the state in which the inhabitants here live is one of glorious ease. The country is full of little villages. Food abounds, and very little labor is required for its cultivation; the soil is so rich that no manure is required; when a garden becomes too poor for good crops of maize, millet, etc., the owner removes a little

farther into the forest, applies fire round the roots of the larger trees to kill them, and cuts down the smaller, and a new rich garden is ready for the seed." Now this is a state of things, we contend, which contributes most materially to the degradation of the people. They can live, they can vegetate, they can indulge in all the depravities of their condition, without labor, or nearly so. And throughout the pages of this very book, in which we find such testimony as this, there are to be met with evidences, either direct or indirect, to show that wherever the negro is induced, or rather compelled, to labor, there is he at once exalted in the scale of humanity.

A very eminent Christian philosopher, who has no predilections for slavery in itself, but would regard it, we are sure, as every Christian man is bound to regard it, as a question that concerns, and must be made to concern, most of all, the happiness, and especially the eternal happiness of those who are its objects, remarks very forcibly upon the case of servitude, as that which, in the circumstances of such a people as the negroes, must be made compulsory—as, indeed, it is virtually so even among civilized people, although under other aspects. His words are very remarkable with relation to our present



subject, when he says: "That beings in the form of men, but sunk by their own faults to the state of brutes, should be placed under severe restraint, should be compelled to labor against their wills, should be even thrown into chains, should be deprived of all power, and subjected to the stern control of others; this is but a necessary provision for the safety of society, and an execution of the justice of nature."\* It is true, he is here speaking more particularly of those who are placed under such restraint on account of their crimes. But where is the real practical difference, as respects, at any rate, man's civilization, and that human progress in which every man, be he black or white, is more or less concerned—where, we say, in such a connection as this, is the real practical difference between a man's own faults, and the faults of the condition into which he has sunk? The negroes of Africa are just as great criminals against society, and against God, as are the convicts of any penal settlement. They are all alike sunk very much to the state of brutes, and they must be dealt with accordingly—"must be placed under severe restraint, be compelled to labor against their wills, be deprived of all power, and be subjected to the stern control of

\* Sewell's Christian Politics,

others." The negroes, we say, are, as a matter of fact, in precisely this situation. And when the eminent Christian writer we have just cited goes on to observe, "that beings weak and helpless should also be made dependent upon those who are strong and wise—that they should not be thrown (or left) upon their own free will, which can only lead them into ruin—that they should be placed under such coercion as may restrain them from evil, and under such subjection to others as may bind their own interests permanently to the interests of their masters; this, also, is not cruelty or injustice, but the same merciful provision which places the infant in the cradle at the mercy and disposal of its parents, without will or voice of its own"—to whom we say, can such language as this apply—where are they to be found who are in any such circumstances—if not the millions of African negroes about whom we are writing?

The permanent happiness of the negro can only, in short, be effectually promoted by making him labor. We say *making him labor*; because not only is his peculiar organization, as a human being, such as to indispose him, of his own will and accord, to labor, but his being without labor is the great cause of his degradation and misery; the reason, in fact, for his

actually losing his liberty, and becoming the slave, if not of some more powerful, exacting, and cruel chief of his own tribe, yet certainly the slave of his own debasing nature.

We have already alluded to Dr. Livingstone's Travels in Africa, and his long residence among the negroes. It is impossible to read his book without becoming convinced of the truth of what we have just stated; and certainly it is no slight thing to be confirmed in our views by so eminent a practical authority on this question, as he must undoubtedly be considered. For instance, describing a number of tribes whose labor is extorted in some state of slavery to which they are subjected by the Dutch colonists around them, he says: "It is on their industry that the more distant Boers revel in slothful abundance, and follow their slave-hunting and cattle-stealing propensities, quite beyond the range of English influence and law. The Basuto under Moshesh are equally fond of cultivating the soil. The chief labor of hoeing, driving away birds, reaping, and winnowing falls to the willing arms of the hard-working women; but as the men, as well as their wives, as already stated, always work, many have followed the advice of the missionaries, and now use ploughs and oxen instead of the hoe." And the result

of this is, that they are made a comparatively happy people by such industry. Again, for instance, Dr. Livingstone, describing some other tribes, those, namely, of the Bakolahari, or western branch of the Bechuana family, among whom the success of the missionaries has been greatest, says: "They were insignificant and filthy people when first discovered; but, being nearest to the colony, they have had opportunities of trading; and the long-continued peace they have enjoyed, through the influence of religious teaching, has enabled them to amass great numbers of cattle." Now this, be it remembered, they are only enabled to do from their being under the control of civilized men, and not left to themselves. The Makalolo tribe are adduced by Dr. Livingstone as furnishing another example of the great improvement in the condition of the negro, which his being influenced or impelled to labor induces. "They now may be seen," he tells us, "going out with their wives with their hoes in hand—a state of things never witnessed at Kolobeng, or among any other Bechuana or Caffre tribe. The great chief Moshesh," he adds, "affords an example to his people annually, by not only taking the hoe in hand, but working hard with it on certain public occasions." Thus clearly demon-

strating that, even among themselves, their chiefs, where they really would have the people to work—whether it be for their own private gain, or for any public purpose, or for the benefit of the people—use something in the shape of compulsion; for in this case even his personal example is intended to have the force of compulsion. The negroes of many tribes, in fact, will instinctively follow their chief—his example is to them as powerful as any compulsion, whether as respects labor or any other physical habit of life. Another instance which Dr. Livingstone gives of the benefits of labor among the African tribes, is when he relates the liberality of the people—wherever they were made to work—in supplying his and his companions' necessities. It is in allusion to such liberality that he states: "The people of every village treated us most liberally, presenting, besides oxen, butter, milk, and meal, more than we could stow away in our canoes. The cows in this valley," he adds, "are now yielding, as they frequently do, more milk than the people can use, and both men and women present butter in such quantity that I shall be able to refresh my men as we move along." Such are the fruits of labor, such the results of industry, even among the negroes of Africa, when they

can be made to work. Why, it would really seem to change their very nature. No Christian people could thus have treated strangers and foreigners wandering among them with greater liberality than they seem to have done Dr. Livingstone and his companions.

Speaking of quite another portion of the negroes of South-Africa, those of the Zambesi, who have also been placed in circumstances where they are made to labor, Dr. Livingstone says: "When we came near a village, we saw men, women, and children employed in weeding their gardens, they being great agriculturists. most of the men are muscular, and have large ploughman hands. Their color is the same admixture, from very dark to light olive, that we saw in Londa. Though all have thick lips and flat noses, only the more degraded of the population possess the ugly negro physiognomy;" those "more degraded of the population" being just such as will not labor—a fact very remarkable, and certainly most conclusively illustrative of the position we are taking up, that labor, compulsory labor, is indispensably necessary to promote the physical improvement and the social and domestic happiness of the whole Negro race.

But it may be said, If such be the case, why

not colonize Africa; or, in some other way, dispatch companies of white and civilized people, skilled agriculturists and mechanics, and others, to teach the people how to labor, and how to turn the resources of their own country to the best account? Such a suggestion as this, we are aware, will be started to much that we have here said. But plausible though it may seem, such a proposition, we have no hesitation in saying, is a very superficial and a very delusive one. In the first place, what part of Africa has ever yet been discovered possessing a climate in which either Europeans or Americans—that is, white and civilized men—could ever live, and make any physical exertion whatever? Dr. Livingstone's book contains many evidences of there being none. The climate of Africa, with very slight exceptions, is quite unfit for the residence of those who have been reared under the temperate zone, or who have been accustomed to habits of civilized life, their continuance of which could not be secured in such a country. In the great majority of instances of Christian missionary efforts, the difficulty of climate has been the great obstacle to their success. Not the want of religious feeling on the part of the negro; for he is, generally speaking, a religious being—in a certain sense much

more so than the white. His very defects, in fact, as a human being, are often, if not generally, such as naturally predispose him to religious faith. He is so exceedingly sensitive to all mysterious influences, that where, among ourselves, difficulties are experienced by our missionaries and ministers of religion generally, in making deep and lasting impressions upon the hearts and minds of the masses of the people, among the negroes, wherever religious influences are brought to bear, not only are there no such difficulties, but too often there is trouble in preventing the natives from being too deeply impressed. They are, indeed, in these respects, very like those barbarous people among whom St. Paul fell, after his shipwreck, when, we are told, "he gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, and there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians," continues the sacred narrative, "saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; but after they had looked a great while,



and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said *that he was a god.*" Just so it is with the negro, so great is the susceptibility of his nature to impressions of this kind: so prompt his readiness to yield to spiritual, no less than other and more visible supernatural influences, that he is but too apt to suppose that the superior being who exercises it, though his fellow-creature, is divine—as was the case with the barbarians in St. Paul's plight alluded to, in which they exclaimed, "he is a god." It is on this account that they are so peculiarly subject to idolatry; and in their particular circumstances, as beings so degraded, so bereft of every thing that is intellectual, or refining, or purifying, or elevating, their idolatry is generally of the lowest, the filthiest, and the most abominable character.

It is evident, then, from all this, that the most effectual way—if not the only effectual way—of improving the condition of the negro, through the means of labor and industry, of elevating his position, of purifying his nature, of developing his capabilities as a man, though at present a most degraded one, must be by placing him under control—by treating him as a child—as one incapable of helping himself; and as therefore in a position not only to justify

civilized men in taking charge of him, and leading him into a situation of life where he may have the opportunity of being elevated, and purified, and made human; but of preparing him thereby for his being made, along with themselves, the object of God's redeeming love, through the Christian covenant. Here, therefore, it is evident, there is a great Christian duty incumbent upon all who are so highly favored by God, as Christians and as civilized men, to aid in rescuing the negro from his present degradation, by transferring him from that situation in which his race has become so degraded, and his continuance in which, it is clear, can only result in that degradation being perpetuated. Even as respects Christian missions, this same argument will hold equally good. For where are the Christian missionaries who have, to any material extent, made permanent progress among the negroes in the promotion of Christianity; who have been at all able, indeed, to do so with satisfaction in such a climate, and in such circumstances as they have been exposed to whenever they have attempted to take up their abode among the natives? No; the negro, we may depend upon it, can not, at present at least, be successfully dealt with on his own soil. He must be transferred to quite another

theatre of action, if he is to be made available for those purposes of his being which, with him equally with ourselves, is doubtless the design of the Creator, and which must surely be necessary to give effect to that decree of his Maker which went forth upon the fall of man: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

We are aware it may further be objected to all this, that such an interference with the negro would be an unjust and indefensible usurpation of authority; would be, indeed, to virtually deprive him of his liberty, of his home, of all that was dear to him, and of every thing, in short, which might go to constitute those inalienable rights which every human being is by nature supposed to possess. But this, also, is a very superficial apprehension. It is one that is founded altogether on a mistaken view of what man's rights really are, when sunk in that degradation, and reduced to that, comparatively speaking, helpless condition in which, by whatever force of circumstances, the negro is undoubtedly placed. There is, in fact, a great mistake prevalent among us, as respects man's rights generally. Right, as has been well ex-

plained, is always allied with obligation ; and they are reciprocal, that is to say, there are no rights which do not necessitate obligations, mutual obligations, among each other, as well as involve personal and individual obligations on the part of every one who has and asserts a right. In morals especially—and if in morals in such a case, then assuredly in any social or political economy also—the assumption and the exercise of rights must involve the responsibility and the discharge of obligations. Now, is the negro, as a savage, as a child of nature, and yet fallen and degraded as such ; and, moreover, not one whit more capable of taking care of himself, of training himself to any useful purpose in life, or of discharging any of the common duties of his existence, as a reasonable creature, than a child—is such an one in a position to assert and to maintain any such rights as belong to man in civilized life, and placed under institutions where the exercise of his rights can be made conducive to the welfare of society, and his own special welfare ? The great Dr. Paley, whose authority we have already cited, argues, and argues as a Christian philosopher, that, “as moral obligation depends on the will of God, ‘right,’ the reciprocal to it, must depend on it also, and means, therefore, ‘consistency with the

will of God.' But," as he well continues, "if 'right' be only the will of God, how can we conceive his acts, a manifestation merely of such will, to be wrong? The answer," he says, "is, that from the two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that his will is the measure of right, we obtain the rules of right and wrong, which we habitually apply to certain acts, even to those of the Deity himself, though at the time of the application we do not perceive that such rules are deduced from the divine will." We may not recognize this divine will. Certainly they who look at any question involving it upon the mere surface will never recognize it; but Christian men can not but feel it, whether they are enabled to perceive it or not: they feel it in every emotion in which conscience has its part; and in every emotion, also, which is in anywise animated by the love of God, and which is a manifestation of His Holy Spirit. Upon this principle, as it is further argued, "it is 'right,' or 'consistent with the will of God,' to punish murder with death;" and if so, surely it must be right to restrain men, under particular circumstances, of their liberty. Upon every principle, indeed, of due regard for the will of God, such restraint may, in many certain cases, be necessary, if it be

true, as undoubtedly it is, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that his will is the measure of right.

We are quite prepared to be told, in this connection, that there are *natural rights* which belong to man, not in a state of society, while those which belong to man in a state of society are *adventitious rights*. And, more than this, perhaps, that while the latter are often alienable, the former are always inalienable. But what are natural rights? Well, we shall be told, we suppose, that they are the rights which a man has to life, and liberty, the use of his limbs, the produce of his labor, the enjoyment of the air, light, and water; while, on the other hand, adventitious rights belong to a state of society which possesses the right to make any and all laws for the regulation of society. But in this view, does not the question really and truly come up thus: Is man to be left, as the negro is, out of a state of society—that is to say, in a state of barbarism—in a state in which he is not only a useless creature of God, but a mischievous one—his own enemy, and the enemy of all around him—not only a cumberer of the ground, but one who, contrary to God's own design, is not only perpetuating, but aggravating the curse of that ground which, though

originally pronounced for man's sake, and through man's crime, is yet to be redeemed by man's labor—yea, by that "sweat of his brow," in which, the very moment the ground was so cursed for his sake, it was declared that he should ever after eat his bread. Let us be explicit. We have no wish to be misunderstood—nay, our whole argument would be futile, and worse, it would be injurious to the very cause we are humbly attempting to serve, were we in any wise misunderstood. The case, then, we repeat, is this: Is it not desirable that large bodies of our fellow-creatures, even at the sacrifice of what might sentimentally be considered their "natural rights," should be raised from that state of barbarism, and degradation, and wretchedness in which the negroes of Africa are now sunk, and placed in a state of society where their natural rights, that is, the rights of man in a savage state, would be changed into adventitious rights—those only rational rights, after all, as belonging to a state of society which possesses the right to make laws and regulations for its own maintainance, for its own welfare, and for the happiness of all concerned? We have used the word *sentimentally*; and we have done so not without thought. That sort of freedom which some people prate about as

the natural right of the negro, does not deserve to be regarded as any thing better than mere sentimentalism, when we come to apply it to any practical means that may be made available for raising them out of savage life. It is all very fine to talk of such liberty—to talk of God having made every man free. The lines of the poet are doubtless very affecting to sentimental minds, when he tells us that we should all be

“Free as nature first made man,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.”

But who that has tasted the happiness of civilized and social life, would wish to be a “noble savage,” and run wild in the woods, even for the sake of enjoying such freedom, as his natural right?

And the question, again, has been asked, How can adventitious rights be created by man, if right itself depend only on the will of God? The answer to this question, which Dr. Paley gives, is not only quite conclusive, but contains within it a principle more powerful, in a practical point of view, in support of the argument we are advancing, than any thing else to which we have yet alluded. “This question,” he says, “may be answered by appealing to the principle that God wills the happiness of mankind. Con-



sequently, acts which lead to happiness in a social state are right, which, not producing the same effect in a state not social, would be wrong. Hence," he very forcibly adds, "adventitious rights made by men, are not less sacred than natural rights, ordained by God, for both rest on the same foundation, the will of the Creator." Now, let any one, just for a moment, bring into connection with an irrefragable argument like this, the case of the negro, who, though it may be pretended he has natural rights ordained by God, yet—we say it reverently—is miserable, and degraded, and depraved, under the operation of those rights, and therefore needs to be brought out from such operation, and transferred to a state of society where his natural rights, so injurious to him and to all the rest of mankind, would be changed for those adventitious rights which, though made by men, are not less sacred, as we have seen, than natural rights ordained by God, both resting on the same foundation, the will of the Creator, and whereby the great end of all God's dealings with men may be in the way of being fully carried out: namely, that happiness of all His creatures which He so mercifully and graciously wills.

In any point of view in which human nature

is rightly regarded, how can such liberty as the wild, untamed, degraded negro of Africa now enjoys, be worth having? and where, therefore, can be the iniquity which your mere sentimental humanitarians would persuade us there is, in changing that natural right of the negro to a liberty which at present is a curse to him, and to the very country which he inhabits, into an adventitious right, in a state of civilized society, which would not only elevate him in the scale of humanity, rescuing him thereby from a state of degradation most disgraceful to humanity, but enabling him to enjoy a rational and a happy existence himself, while by the labor of his hands, as designed by God himself, he contributed to the happiness of all around him? Well did the great Dr. Channing remark, that "the only freedom worth possessing is that which gives enlargement to a people's energy, intellect, and virtues. The savage makes his boast of freedom. But what is it worth? Free as he is, he continues for ages in the same ignorance, leads the same comfortless life, sees the same untamed wilderness spread around him. He is, indeed, free from what he calls *the yoke* of civil institutions. But other and worse chains bind him. The very privation of civil government is, in effect, a chain; for, by withholding pro-

tection from property, it virtually shackles the arm of industry, and forbids exertion for the melioration of his lot. Progress, the growth of power, is the end and boon of liberty ; and, without this, a people may have the name, but want the substance and spirit of freedom." Here, then, we have the question of liberty put, by one of its most able expounders, in a position which it would be impossible to illustrate more thoroughly or more truly, than by its application to this very question of the negro of Africa. "Progress," he says, "the growth of power, is the end and boon of liberty." Progress! Is there any such thing as *progress*, or has there ever been, or will there ever be, among the negroes of Africa? Yes, progress of evil, progress of degradation, progress of depravity, progress of every thing that is devilish, and inhuman, and monstrous ; but certainly not progress in human happiness, in human enlightenment, in human greatness—to say nothing whatever, at present, of that still higher and holier progress—progress, namely, in the knowledge and the love of God, and in the practice of all those virtues which are involved in such a knowledge and such a love, and in our preparation thereby for that still higher and holier state of existence to which we are all called. Such

progress as this, it is, and this only, which is indeed "the end and boon of liberty." And not only can no liberty be worth having which is not an "end and boon" in a such progress, but the sooner it were taken away, or at any rate changed into liberty of another form—liberty as the result not of a natural but an adventitious right—a right, not of savage life, but of civilized society—the better, most undoubtedly, will it be, not only for the happiness of the world, but for the glory of God, its Almighty Ruler.

All this in a moral and social point of view. And with those—and, alas! they are legion—who will *only* regard such a subject as this in that point of view, surely the argument is an irresistible one, and conclusive of the whole question at issue. As respects our duty as men in a state of civilized society, and with powers and privileges acquired in such a state, for the exercise of which we are responsible to God, we lie under solemn obligations. It is, indeed, a duty incumbent upon us to care for the negro race, as fellow-creatures not only less favored than we are in all those regards, but as claiming at our hands that assistance which they can derive from no other human source, to enable them to emerge from their present degraded condition, and acquire a proper standing-place in the great

human family. In their present state, they are not only degraded and demoralized, but they are actually dismembered from civilized society, if not also positively excluded from the human family in its civilization. But how much more stringent does the argument become, when we sanctify it, as it were, by connecting it with religious considerations, and place it beside those obligations which we, as Christians, owe to them, as a lost portion of the family of fallen humanity, and one that is utterly debased, irremediably debased, in fact, unless we will arouse ourselves and exercise our duty towards them, in a spirit of Christian charity? In the providence of God, they have been left to themselves: having joined themselves to idols, God has "let them alone." They have no light of the Gospel to guide them back into any path of righteousness, or any other path which can lead them out of their present most depraved and degraded position; nor could they, save by such a miraculous interposition of Almighty power, as it is not, apparently, within the scope of the divine dispensation, in these latter days, to exert, be brought to that light. We, therefore, who have it ourselves, and are ordained as an agency in the hands of God to show it forth to all the world, must present it to them. It is quite true

that we have Christian missionaries, here and there, attempting to do it ; but notwithstanding the labors of ages, in some portions of Africa, or others—indeed of many centuries altogether—how comparatively trifling and small is the progress that has been made ! Why, there is reason to believe that even in those countries where the missionaries have been enabled to secure a permanent footing, not one hundredth part of the population has yet been brought under any Christian influences. And why ? Why, but that the miserable people are surrounded by circumstances, and committed to habits, and affected by motives arising therefrom, which combine to constitute, in that vast majority of cases, an insurmountable barrier of access to their souls. Here, then, were certainly a reason—even a Christian reason—why, as we have already said, their natural rights should be changed to adventitious ones—why they themselves should be transferred, or many of them, from their present debasing moral and physical atmosphere, as one in which that great remedy for their degradation, labor, can not be fully and profitably pursued, and therefore where there is so great an obstacle to their being brought under Christian influences, to another which, both morally, physically, and religiously, would be

eminently adapted to regenerate them, in every respect.

And here, as we enter into a consideration of this part of the question, one can not fail to be struck with a very important fact in the Christian dispensation, which has a close bearing upon the case of the negro, as a being that needs to be placed under restraint, to be deprived, in fact, to a certain extent, of what people would call his natural rights, but to speak more plainly still, of his liberty—his liberty, we mean, as a savage: the fact, namely, that there is no such thing as positive liberty, in any religious sense at least, under that divine dispensation. Let us look at this in the only connection in which it is found in any authentic shape—we mean the Church of Christ. And what does one of the eminent Christian philosophers, whose words we have already quoted, say of it, as it is thus to be applied to the case of the African negro, no less than to the case of every human being who would, through its divinely ordained instrumentalities, seek the salvation of his soul? “The Church,” says Mr. Sewell, “comes before man—weak, fickle, doubtful, capricious man, the slave of every impulse, ‘tossed about by every wind of doctrine,’ and yet yearning for some haven of rest, some stay in a stronger arm—and

promises to give him that rest and support, in the presence of an external power to which he must conform his actions, become its servant, submit to its will, adopt its decrees, believe by its belief, hope in its promises, live in its life, be immortal in its immortality. It does not cut the ship from its anchorage, and give it up to be tossed about by every wave and storm, but binds it by a stronger cable to a safer rock. It does not open the gate and let the imprisoned bird go free, for it knows that in this inclement clime, if left to itself, the bird must perish: but it provides a better abode, and purer water, and healthier nutriment, and a place in which, even though imprisoned, the bird will rejoice to dwell, and sing as sweetly, and take its flight as boldly, and plume its wings as gladly, as if it were ranging in a forest. It does not compassionate the tree which can not grow except rooted to the soil, and cut those roots and tear up the trunk, as if it could live in independence; but it transplants it from a hungry ground, full of poisonous juices, and imbeds it in a genial loam, where its fibres will strike deeper, and its boughs spread kindlily and fully into the majesty of their perfect stature. It never promises to man *liberty*; for man was not made for liberty, and can no more live in it than fishes in the air,



or birds in the water ; but it takes him from an evil servitude and places him in another which is good." And is not the negro, both morally and physically, in the very condition which is here supposed ? Is he not, at present, as a bird that does go free, and that does need, therefore, to be imprisoned, since "in this inclement clime, if left to itself, the bird must perish"—as perish, both temporally and everlastingly, the negro untamed undoubtedly does ? Is he not one who requires, physically as well as morally, "to be provided with a better abode, and purer water, and healthier nutriment, and a place in which even though imprisoned, the bird will rejoice to dwell, and sing as sweetly, and take its flight as boldly, and plume its wings as gladly, as if it were ranging in a forest" ? Could any metaphor be more Christian than this ; or any more applicable to the case of the African negro ? Does not he need to be "transplanted from a hungry ground, full of poisonous juices, and imbedded in a genial loam, where the fibres of his humanity will strike deeper, and his boughs spread kindly and fully into the majesty of their perfect stature" ? Most assuredly he does. But then, let us not forget that the Divine dispensation under which this is to be done, "never promises to man liberty"—least of all

such liberty as, in all the wildness, and waywardness, and degradation of his savage nature, the negro enjoys. Surely, of one in such a state as this, at any rate, the saying is emphatically true—"Man was not made for liberty." Man was certainly never made for such liberty as that which the African negro revels in, and degrades himself in, and makes himself not only a curse to his own race, but a shame and a disgrace to all mankind.

But to return again, for a moment, to the mere secular view of the case, as respects the liberty of the negro, and the denial of any right, on the part of civilized man, to interfere with that liberty. It has already been shown, that even in civilized communities, and under the freest and most enlightened institutions, as, for instance, those of our own country, or those of Great Britain, man does not enjoy any absolute liberty, but often places himself, especially by his crimes, in a position where he must be deprived of all liberty whatever. And not only so—not only where he has become criminal, but where he has fallen—it may be by misfortune, or it may be by improvidence, or profligacy—into a condition of life, impoverished, helpless, destitute. And then, when this is the case, what is to be done—what is to be done in

any well-regulated state of Christian society? Is the man left to himself with only his *liberty* to comfort him and help him? On the contrary, does not the omnipotent arm of the State interpose? Does it not gather under its protection the starving, houseless, miserable beings who have been called into existence under the vicissitudes of that very state of society, who have been left by its mercenary and miserable influences, and who have been reduced thereby to the *minimum* of human existence, and, through that cause, to demoralization and despair? Does it not feel itself compelled to gather them in masses, even by particular and palpable lines of distinction, which virtually amount to a requirement of the surrender of their liberty, and even of what some would not hesitate to call their most natural rights? Why, in England, under the Poor Laws—under those very Poor Laws which large-hearted, and high-principled, and liberal-minded statesmen and philanthropists, like Brougham, and Romilly, and Russell, and others—who have won the sympathies even of us American republicans—contributed to frame and enact; under those now generally considered most beneficent laws, no sooner does a man, from whatever cause, fall into pauperism, and find it necessary to apply for relief, than by that very

application, he forfeits his liberty. The rules and regulations of the English Union Work-houses go as strictly and thoroughly upon that principle—the principle, we mean, of a surrender of the liberty of every one who places himself under them—as is ever the case, even under our own system of negro slavery. And the cases are much more parallel ones than may at first sight appear. John Bull, however, still continues to sing as lustily as ever, “Britons never shall be slaves;” and still, with reason, too. Yet slaves, it often happens that many thousands of his sons and daughters become, even in their own country, in such a process as this. Yes; in times of distress in England, John Bull, is, in a certain sense, one of the greatest slave-owners under the sun! But then, where is the help for it? How is it to be avoided, if his sons and daughters are to be cared for, are to be housed, and fed, and protected, and provided with the means of subsistence, and rescued from degradation and misery, from falling into as depraved and wretched a condition as even the African negroes themselves—how is it to be dealt with, but by that system of relief which involves, as we have shown, the actual surrender of their liberty? And if so with free-born Englishmen—if so, not only upon a sound principle of political econ-

omy, but in accordance also with the principles of Christian philanthropy — why not in the case of the African negro, who, in his present savage and degraded life, can only be rescued from degradation and wretchedness, and made happy in himself, and useful to mankind, as God designed him to be, by some restriction of that liberty under which his present abject condition has arisen and is perpetuated?

Well, then, we come now to the practical point at issue. How, even at the surrender of the negro's liberty, is he thus to be rescued, and thus made to contribute, as he ought to do, and as God designed him to do, to the carrying on of that great and manifold scheme of human industry and enterprise, by which human progress is promoted and maintained, and through the means of which even the kingdom of Christ is advanced in the world? At present his labor is stolen away, and made subservient to mere individual and mercenary interests, under circumstances, generally, of the most revolting cruelty. We need but refer to the horrors of the slave-trade, to present a picture—the details of which every one can realize for himself—of that revolting system under which, at present, the African negro is transferred from his native land, and made the slave—too often the misera-

ble and degraded slave—of the covetous, and the cruel, and the abandoned, who seek through the sufferings of their fellow-men, no other object than their own enrichment. For the fact is, as we have the testimony of many centuries to show, that the labor of the negro, even upon this continent, must be procured. There was a time, we all know, when the slave-trade, being recognized, if not sanctioned, by the governments, not only of this country, but of Europe, was placed under certain regulations which furnished some check to those atrocities which, since such regulations have been withdrawn, have too generally characterized it. And were it necessary, it would be easy to show, how powerful an argument there is to be found, even in such a circumstance as this, in favor of some legitimate mode of transfer of the negro to fields of operation where his labor is needed, and where he himself and his family may be made happy and contented, while they are raised in the scale of humanity; and, above all, through Christian influences, led into the way of salvation. But on this point we forbear. The case, indeed, is sufficiently plain without it. No one who has had any opportunities of becoming acquainted with the nature of the slave-trade, can possibly need to be shown how infi-

nately advantageous would be some legalized system of transfer, under national controls and restraints, in preference to the horrible system at present in vogue for replenishing the market of negro labor, both on this continent and in the West-India islands.

The grand point, then, is this: How can we, not only with the least suffering to the negro, but with the greatest advantage, both present and prospective, to him and all connected with him, transfer his labor from the present scene of his existence, where it is practically unavailable, to some other theatre of action, where it can be appropriated so profitably to all concerned, and under circumstances which, so far from involving any real grievance to him, would ultimately raise him to a condition of usefulness, and dignity, and happiness, which, in his native country, it would be impossible he could ever attain to? By no individual effort, involving, as that undoubtedly must, a mere personal responsibility, can any such transfer ever be carried on; but that it may be done by nations would seem to be perfectly practicable and easy, provided only that some broad, liberal, and benevolent Christian basis could be laid down on which to conduct it. The principle on which to proceed is evidently this:

There are, as we have shown, on the one hand, millions of our fellow-creatures, not only useless, but degraded — miserable in themselves, and a very curse to all around them, even to the ground on which they dwell—who are devoid of all opportunity of bettering their own condition—who never, by any means, can possibly, of themselves, emerge from that condition, vile, and depraved, and disgraced as it is; while, on the other hand, there are civilized nations of the earth who want the labor of these people, and who can employ it with profit both to those who labor and those for whom they labor, and, in fact, for the good of the whole commonwealth; and not only so, but Christian nations, who lie under an obligation not to deny the lamp of life to those who have it not, but to give it to them, and bring them under its elevating, ennobling, and saving influences. These, we say, are the two sides of the case; and these put together, it is, which must constitute the basis, and may easily be made to constitute the basis, if the nations will only be actuated by liberal and enlightened Christian motives, in such a movement as, in process of no long time, might be made to effect the transfer of very large bodies of the negro race to scenes of industry and happiness, in which, while they made



themselves useful in their day and generation, and secured an elevation of their own nature, would at the same time place themselves legitimately and deservedly, within the pale of Christian civilization and progress, and, in the words of Holy Writ, be made "heirs, through hope, of everlasting salvation."

Here, then, is a question for the statesmen of the civilized world, more important, perhaps, in its character, its objects, and its issues, than any question which has agitated the world for the last century. It is a question, indeed, which not only concerns the statesman, but the philanthropist; and not only these, but all those interests in which the welfare of nations is so intimately bound up—and above all, the nations which call themselves Christian. A congress of such nations should therefore be called to consider this question. And where, we ask, in the annals of the nations of the earth, whether political or social, have we records of any congress that could compare with this, in the magnitude of its importance—an importance involving, be it remembered, not only the present material interests, and social advantages of those nations, but the immortal destinies of millions of our fellow-creatures connected therewith.

Into the particular details of such a scheme

it would perhaps be premature, at present, to enter. That its very construction will be one of difficulty, there can be no doubt whatever; that its execution would be beset with infinitely greater difficulties, we are also prepared to expect. What great work, indeed, was ever done without encountering difficulties; especially a work in the doing of which there was to be regarded that divinest of all principles which is involved in what on the highest of all authorities we are told is "the first and great commandment"—namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is on this principle only, that any such scheme, to succeed, must undoubtedly be devised. And why, in a congress of Christian nations, should there be any hesitation in devising such a scheme? At any rate, let the subject be taken up by our Christian statesmen, and philanthropists, and divines. For it concerns them all—it is within each one's immediate province—it is the duty, the bounden duty, under our present circumstances, of each and all of them. What would be easier than for delegations from all the Christian nations of Europe and America, all of whom are so deeply interested in this subject, to meet together, say

in the metropolis of England—England, which has certainly sacrificed the most in the cause of the negro, though she may have done it, in some degree, mistakenly and unsuccessfully; and, probably, at the same time, without really understanding her divine mission, not only as a great pioneer of human progress, and civilization, and evangelization, but as having it in her power to render more material aid in all these objects than any other nation at present on the face of the earth. If we might descend a little into any detail of the arrangements of such a congress, we should say let it be held on the next Fourth of July—a day on which there would certainly be enlisted, on such an occasion, and in such a cause, the warmest sympathies of our own people; and these are sympathies, be it remembered, without which no such great work could ever be fully accomplished, both because America can furnish so formidable a check upon the slave-trade, which such a scheme as this aims so directly to annihilate, and because she has negro interests at heart, and has reason to have, far beyond any other nation—and interests, too, which, at this present time, threaten the very unity and entirety of her own republic.

Whatever may be the nature of the arrange-

ments to be settled for the employment of negro labor, either in the Southern States of our own country, or elsewhere, under any system to which the United States may be a party, it must be provided, that only to really and truly Christian men shall the charge of the negroes be intrusted. We by no means contemplate their being held as slaves, in any such sense, at least, as at present they are both held in slavery and considered and treated as the goods and chattels of their masters, or rather their owners. Servitude, as we have said before, is one thing, and slavery is quite another thing. Their labor must be obtained; and obtained, if need be, by coercion, in some way or other. It must be compulsory labor, because with them nothing but compulsion, in some shape, will exact that labor from them. It is a divine precept, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." And it is the application of this divine precept in their case that we would make the rule of action—though we would make it so in no sense cruelly, unjustly, or unnecessarily. The negroes must have masters, and these masters must effectually control them—must have an entire command of them, as laborers, and as servants. Neither must the negroes be at liberty to rid themselves of such mastership, in any case, of

their own accord—in no case, indeed, save by an authority superior to that of the masters themselves—an authority derived from law, and exercised under lawful provisions. These, however, are details the further discussion of which we would, for the present, decline to enter upon. They are subjects, indeed, not so much for public inquiry, as for legislative enactment; and under the operation of such a system as is here proposed, there need be no difficulty whatever in providing them.

They are the friends of humanity, be assured—they are the friends of human civilization and progress—they are the friends of commerce, of industry, and of all that can advance a people—who would thus engage in an arrangement which so many, and such high interests evidently demand, at the present moment. Were there no other question than this—the degraded condition of so many millions of our fellow-creatures in Africa, who are capable of being elevated and made useful, and even honorable in their day and generation, while at the same time they contributed, by their industry and their example, to promote all that can make the nations of every quarter of the globe great and good, surely it would be deserving the highest and foremost regard of our statesmen, our

philanthropists, and our divines. Well has it been observed, that "there are limits to the progress of man's animal frame: it is stationary, it declines, and is dissolved; but to the progress of intelligence, in ascending the scale of knowledge and of wisdom, there are not any physical limits short of the universe itself, which the happy mind aspires to know, and to the order of which he would form his will. The animals," it is continued, "are qualified by their organization and their instincts, for the particular element, and the circumstances in which they are placed, and they are not fit for any other; but man, by his intelligent powers, is qualified for any scene of which the circumstances may be observed, and in which the proprieties of conduct may be understood."\* Here then, there is a principle, also, which must of necessity pervade such a movement as we advocate. It is not to promote "the progress of man's animal frame" *merely*, that we seek to rescue the negro from his present degraded state, whether physical or moral; but it is that he might be put in the way—the only way—of entering upon that "progress of intelligence," of endeavoring to ascend that "scale of knowledge and wisdom" to which "there are not any

\* Tucker.

physical limits short of the universe itself." That this is possible, we have records of history in abundance to testify. Our sable brethren have often distinguished themselves, when placed under circumstances which have regenerated alike their physical and their mental powers, and may do so again. Only place them in a scene "in which the proprieties of conduct may be understood"—the powers of their intellect be awakened and put forth, and their physical organization restored to that state which would enable them to give effect to all that the Creator has destined humanity to perform.

How such a scheme as this would affect our present system of slavery is, we admit, a very momentous question of itself, and one which, should the cupidity and selfishness of man be permitted to prevail, we are free to confess our apprehension might involve very formidable if not insurmountable obstacles to its success—nay, even to its very experiment. But, surely, on this very account, there is only all the greater reason for some such experiment being *considered*, at least, if not *attempted*; for no one, we think, can be satisfied with our system of slavery as it at present exists. Our Southern friends themselves are not satisfied with it; and undoubtedly they deserve our warmest sympa-

thies in their dissatisfaction. Their position altogether is a much more critical, a much more difficult one, than we in the North and East are perhaps in the habit of considering, having really no reliable national protection for the great interests at stake—interests in which not only their prosperity, but their existence as a community, is unquestionably involved, along with even the country's welfare itself. They are cut off from us in the North and East by the very character of their own peculiar interests, and the nature of our own freer and more humane institutions. They are conscious, too, we believe, themselves of their false and perilous position, and would gladly—or at least a majority of them would—have it changed, could they only see their way to its being done without ruin and anarchy.

How is it possible, then, in such a state of things, that the great Southern States of this Union can keep pace with us, can keep pace with their country, in that extraordinary progress which as a people we are making, to the wonder and admiration of the whole civilized world!

“Two principles,” it has been forcibly observed, “govern the moral and intellectual World. One is perpetual Progress; the other,



the necessary limitations to that Progress. If the former alone prevailed, there would be nothing steadfast and durable on earth, and the whole of social life would be the sport of winds and waves. If the latter had exclusive sway, or even if it obtained a mischievous preponderancy, every thing would petrify or rot. The best ages of the world are always those in which these two principles are the most equally balanced. In such ages, every enlightened man ought to adopt both principles into his whole mind and conduct, and with one hand develop what he *can*—with the other restrain and uphold what he *ought*.”\* It is upon these two principles, then, that we would pursue such an object as this; and it is upon the same principle that we call upon the South to act in such a conjuncture. At present it is evident, not only to ourselves but to Europe, that under, not the necessary, but the absolute limitations to that progress in which the whole country is embarked, that the South are insisting upon and sustaining, every thing, with them at least, is beginning to “petrify and rot;” and that their position is one, not of the *best* ages of the world, but of the *worst*—not of a state of society in which the two principles referred to are the

\* Genz.

most equally, or in anywise equally balanced, but when one, and that the corrosive and destructive one, is allowed so completely to neutralize the other, and give it "a mischievous preponderancy and exclusive sway," that there can be no healthful progress—no keeping pace with the other and better parts of the Union—no harmony with them, in fact, in their progress, whether we regard that progress in its social, its material, its moral, or its religious characteristics.

We know that what is here advanced may be regarded by many as a very startling innovation—and so undoubtedly it is. Yet though we may be *startled* by innovations, surely, as an enlightened people, we are not to be *deterred* by them. "Time," said Lord Bacon, "is the greatest of innovators." But at the same time it is the greatest of improvers—and if ever there was a remarkable illustration of this fact, it is to be seen in the extraordinary progress of our own country. Let not, then, such a proposition as this which we have ventured to make to our countrymen, and to the world, be turned away from with any apprehension on that account. Something, all men admit, must be done on the subject of negro slavery and negro labor; and that something, whatever it be, must of neces-

sity involve an utter subversion of the present repulsive and rotten system, and the establishment of one in its place, not only more in character with the principles of this enlightened age of material progress and human improvement, but which will enable all concerned to participate with credit in its great responsibilities, and to enjoy with satisfaction its various results.





